



Native Americans

By Christian McWilliams

I am a descendant of the Navajo, a Native American tribe located primarily in the US state of Arizona. I take great pride in my ancestry, a pride reawakened every time I am with my family or my mind wanders to Navajo art or history.

The Navajo creation story has been traditionally passed down orally, as up until recently the language has had no written form. It tells of a small island where a pine tree grew, surrounded by four seas each governed by their own god. It talks of what creatures existed there and how the first man and woman came to be, finding each other after the two had independently created fire in the darkness. From there they traveled together through various worlds until they reached the fourth world, our world, and created the stars, the moon, and the seasons with the help of the holy people.

It is one of many surviving stories from American Indian tribes. Really, the terms Indian, Native American, or American Indian are no more descriptive than European or Asian. The five million people identifying with an indigenous tribe in the U.S. are diverse and spread across the country. Their cultures span beyond the limited symbols of tomahawks and feathered headdresses and would require more words that I am allotted here to respectfully represent.

Pan-Indianism, referring to Native American tribes as one unified culture, is too common, but in some ways is apt. Since the first arrival of European sailors in North America the indigenous tribes have been shared victims to a 50-90 percent rapid population collapse (mostly to disease and exacerbated by western expansion), near loss of everything defining them from land to cultural practices, and an exclusion from the majority of U.S. successes. When compared to most Americans today, the various tribes' similarities are more obvious than their differences.

Americans, like all nations, have an origin story that helps define who we are. We are a country of immigrants chasing prosperity and blazing an untamed land. We are a nation forged through revolution against a king and founded on the principles of liberty, egalitarianism, and democracy. This story unites most Americans, but excludes Indians or, like in

my own case, creates a split identity between the heavy influences of American culture and the deep roots reaching back thousands of years.

It doesn't leave much room for the tribes. Native Americans aren't immigrants in that, beyond heredity, they have little to no connection to the peoples who first populated the Americas 15,000 years ago. They fought no unified part in the American Revolution and have been cast no respectable role in those historic events. The tribes' very existence contradicts the idea of the untamed American wilderness and for that they have been relegated to reservations and mostly ignored.

Also, the troubles of modern Native Americans are shared troubles. Despite the U.S. government's recent history of attempting to improve the lives of those on reservations, Native Americans still fall in lower brackets for income, education, and quality of health than all other American ethnic groups. They often live in the most impoverished and undeveloped portions of the country with little to no power in exchange for the autonomy required to keep their peoples intact.

Reservations are not typically prosperous places. In 2010, a quarter of Native American households were below the federal poverty line, compared to a 15 percent U.S. average. Education levels lag, leading the U.S. in drop-out rates and lack of higher education. In 2000, the dropout rate for 16-19 year old Native American was 16 percent — double the national average.

Their poor health can be partly attributed to history. By 1890, Native Americans were not allowed to leave their reservations to hunt or fish, disrupting with their active lifestyles and healthy diets. Government supplied rations of flour, lard and sugar seeded the current cultural preference for nutritiously poor processed food. This, coupled with poverty and poor diet, has left almost 40 percent of all Native Americans obese. Sixteen percent suffer from Type II diabetes. Some tribes are more greatly affected; half of the Pima Indians of Arizona are diabetic.

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The American Center

C-49, G Block, B. K. C., Bandra East Mumbai – 400051 Tel: 022-2672-4024
E-mail: mumbaipublicaffairs@state.gov; Website: <http://mumbai.usconsulate.gov>
Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Monday through Friday)

H O L I D A Y S

September 3 - Labor Day
September 19 - Ganesh Chaturthi

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Native Americans find themselves in the same catch-22 of many indigenous people. Their lives are behind their surrounding neighbors, and more readily accepting change or federal help could greatly benefit them. However, it runs the risk of full assimilation and an unraveling of what defines them. At what point does culture trump economic success? Is a faster improvement of their livelihood worth losing autonomy? Can tradition survive while embracing modernity?

Should you find yourself in Washington, DC, please visit The National Museum of the American Indian located on the National Mall. It has an entire floor dedicated to educating visitors on the lives of modern Native Americans. Video interviews of communities, families, and individuals splice the history of tribes from their reality today. And that is what I wish to impart most - We are still here. We are more than stories in history books or characters in movies. We have serious modern challenges facing us, but our families, languages, religions and customs live on.

ATTENTION ALUMS

If you are an
alumnus of a
United States
exchange
program and
have received
special recogni-

tion, please send a write-up with 2-3 photos to mumbaipublicaffairs@state.gov. You could be featured in future e-bulletins!

George Washington with Native American



pics4learning.com

WORD FROM THE CENTER

In the U.S., September is often a time of beginnings. Most schools at all levels begin their academic year in September. September is the month when the summer season eases into the beginning of fall (autumn). But September can also be a time of endings. For the U.S. government, our fiscal year runs from October 1 – September 30, so the American Center is closing out one year, reflecting on what went well and what did not, while at the same time beginning the plans for our next year – so both a beginning and an ending. And while we are closing out one year and planning the next, we are still kept busy with on-going programs, and there is a lot going on in September! Our Facebook page is updated regularly to keep you informed.

In Ahmedabad, September always means the anniversary of our American Corner, hosted in partnership with the Ahmedabad Management Association. We celebrate the 8th Anniversary this year, as usual, with a KnowledgeUSA quiz for students. We have some great prizes planned, sponsored by Inductotherm, so students, form your teams and get ready! Not sure you know enough about the U.S. to join in the quiz? No worries, anyone can come and watch and learn. Check out our Facebook page for details.

We are planning a visit to the Madhya Pradesh cities of Indore and Bhopal. We don't get a chance often enough to visit, so we have some big plans. We'll be bringing information on study in the U.S., student visas, travel and tourism, tourist visas, and the exciting, upcoming U.S. Presidential election. There will be something for everyone, stay tuned to our Facebook page as we confirm events.

Notice a theme running through this Word from the Center, in addition to just the month of September? Yes, we want you to go to our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/Mumbai.usconsulate/. You can keep yourself informed about our events, ask questions, and leave comments. We love to hear from you!



Anne E. Grimes
Public Affairs Officer



SATURDAY FILM SCREENINGS

Theme of the Month: Native American History Month



SEPTEMBER 1



Frozen River

(2008, 97 mins)

Takes place in the days before Christmas near a little-known border crossing on the Mohawk reservation between New York State and Quebec.

SEPTEMBER 22



The Missing

(2003, 137 mins)

In 1885 New Mexico, a frontier medicine woman forms an uneasy alliance with her estranged father when her daughter is kidnapped by an Apache brujo.

SEPTEMBER 15

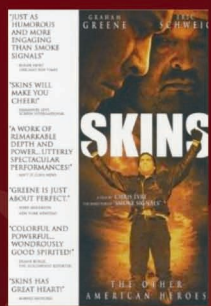


The New World

(2005, 135 mins)

The English exploration of Virginia and Pocahontas' loves and her changing world.

SEPTEMBER 29



Skins

(2002, 84 mins)

An inspirational tale about the relationship between two Sioux Indian brothers living on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation.

Screening will start at 2:30 p.m.

FREE
and open to public
on a first-come, first-served basis.

Venue:
U.S. Consulate General

C-49, G Block, Near Trident Hotel, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai - 51

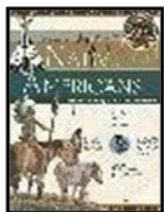


Mobile phones and laptops are permitted for this event, but Bluetooth technology must be disabled. Cameras, memory storage devices, and other electronic equipment are not allowed. Photography and video recording in and around the Consulate compound is strictly prohibited.

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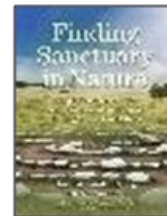
NOTES FROM THE AMERICAN LIBRARY

Resources on Native Americans



Tools of Native Americans: A Kid's Guide to the History and Culture of the First Americans by Kim Kavin. Nomad Press, 2007

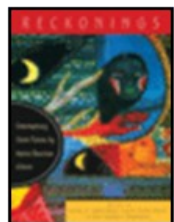
Finding Sanctuary in Nature: Simple Ceremonies in the Native American Tradition for Healing Yourself and Others by Ewing Nvnehi Awatisgi. Findhorn Press, 2007



Native American History for Kids: With 21 Activities by Karen Bush Gibson. Chicago Review Press, 2010

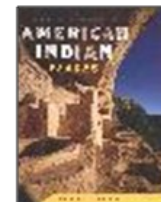


Kid's Guide to Native American History: More than 50 Activities by Yvonne Wakim Dennis and Arlene Hirschfelder. Chicago Review Press, 2009.



Reckonings: Contemporary Short Fiction by Native American Women by Hertha Dawn Sweet Wong et.al. Oxford University Press, 2008.

American Indian Places: A Historical Guidebook by Frances H. Kennedy. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008.



Documentaries in Filmmakers Library, eLibraryUSA



Spirits for Sale directed by Folke Johansson. Produced by Folke Johansson, (Filmmakers Library, 2008) 58:25 mins

When Annika is given an eagle feather by a Native American visiting Sweden, she realizes it is a sacred object which should probably not be in her hands. These days Native American ceremonies are being commercialized for "outsiders," arousing resentment in the Native community. In this film we hear from a professor of Native American history in San Antonio who discusses the five hundred tribes who lived in the US centuries ago and recalls the massacres they suffered.



Buried Stories directed by Kirkenslager, Julie & Wick, Emily. Produced by Allen Pastron, (Filmmakers Library, 2009) 34:04 mins

Buried Stories reveals the life story of a Native American (Ohlone/Esselen) Ella Rodriguez, who, in her seventies, still resents that she was taken from her rural California home at age thirteen and sent to an Indian boarding school. Ella's later years bridged her Native American past and modern archaeological research. A resilient and wisecracking woman in a hard hat, Ella fought to preserve her ancestors' history. Told through Ella's charismatic and poignant lens, her story incites curiosity about the historical and cultural forces that shaped her destiny and identity.

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Saturday Kids' Movie

WHITE FANG

(1991, 107 MIN)

Sprawling, beautiful filmization of Jack London's classic tale. A boy discovers adventure and camaraderie with an orphaned Alaskan husky in the Klondike during the Alaskan Gold Rush. Klaus Maria Brandauer and Ethan Hawke star in this thrilling, family-oriented epic.

Starring Ethan Hawke
Klaus Maria Brandauer
Seymour Cassel

Venue

U.S. Consulate General

C-49, G Block, Near Trident Hotel
Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai - 400 051



September 15
at 11:00 AM

This event is for children 6-16 years old; children under 16 must be accompanied by a parent.
Free and open on a first-come, first-served basis.

Mobile phones and laptops are permitted, but Bluetooth technology must be disabled. Cameras, memory storage devices, and other electronic equipment are not allowed. Photography and video recording in and around the Consulate compound is strictly prohibited.

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The First People: The Last Word produced by Torsten Jansen & Hanne Ruzou (Filmmakers Library, 2002) 44 mins

For the first time since their land was taken many Native Americans tribes have the opportunity of taking over the rights to the land they live on and creating a cultural consciousness. The filmmakers start their journey in the Dakotas, where 100 years ago the Oglala Sioux Nation was nearly wiped out at Wounded Knee. Today the Oglala Lakota College is the fastest growing college in South Dakota.

DVDs available at The American Library



We Shall Remain: America Through Native Eyes— PBS Home Video, c2009. (5 parts, 30 mins. each)

We Shall Remain establishes native history as an essential part of American history. These five documentaries spanning almost four hundred years tell the story of pivotal moments in U.S. history from the Native American perspective, upending two-dimensional stereotypes of American Indians as simply ferocious warriors or peaceable lovers of the land.

For more information or additional resources, contact

The American Library
<http://amlibindia.state.gov>

Call - 26724231/ 4024
Email – libref@state.gov



Are you, or someone you know, interested in studying in the United States? Visit the EducationUSA advisors at the U.S. - India Education Foundation (USIEF) to accurate, comprehensive, current, reliable, unbiased and up-to-date information for students who are interested in pursuing higher education in the US.

The path to a US degree appears to be long and tiring. However, with the right approach, each student can pursue their desired program at their chosen university. Once the requirements like GRE and TOEFL are done, the most important step is preparing a rough list of universities. It is simple enough to search for universities offering the desired program and go through their course list. Individual university websites offer a wealth of information ranging from the faculty research interests, their achievements and financial aid to the current positions of the alumni. Other than courses, factors like location (rural/urban), type (public/private) as well as average size of a class should be considered.

Based on the initial list of universities, contacting students and alumni of these universities is important to get their inputs. Another way is to join educational forums and university specific groups on social networking sites and contact seniors. You should visit the United States India Educational Foundation (USIEF) (who represent EducationUSA which is supported by the US Department of State) for seminars and one-on-one sessions about shortlisting universities.

A shortlist which includes safe, moderate and ambitious universities is a good bet. The admission requirements and deadlines of each of these universities should be noted. The most common and time consuming requirement is the statement of purpose (SOP). Seniors, family members, friends and advisors at USIEF can offer insights to improve the SOP. Apply for transcripts and approach professors early for letters of recommendation.

The application process itself is not complicated. It involves filling an online application form followed by sending documents such as transcripts by courier. Once the application is done, it can take anywhere from 2 weeks to few months for a decision to be available. Contrary to popular belief, it is possible to apply to US universities without a counselor. The only requirements are a little hard work and the internet!

Once the admits are in, it is time to apply for the visa for the chosen university. No special preparation for the interview is required. At most, meeting visa officers at USIEF to solve doubts is sufficient. Once you have the visa in hand, the only things left to do are shop, pack and fly!

By Kalika Kamat
BE in Biotechnology, Thadomal Shahani
Current MS in Biotechnology
University of Pennsylvania

Stanford Pow Wow



Did you know?

Many of the American State names come from Native American terms?

Alabama	From Alabama River by early European explorers and named "Alibamu" after the local Indian tribe
Alaska	Corruption of Aleut word meaning "great land" or "that which the sea breaks against"
Arizona	Uncertain. Perhaps from the O'odham Indian word for "little spring"
Arkansas	From the Quapaw Indians
Connecticut	From an Indian word (Quinnehtukqut) meaning "beside the long tidal river"
Illinois	Algonquin for "tribe of superior men"
Indiana	Meaning "land of Indians"
Iowa	From the Iowa River which was named after the Ioway Indian tribe
Kansas	From a Sioux word meaning "people of the south wind"
Kentucky	From an Iroquoian word "Ken-tah-ten" meaning "land of tomorrow"
Massachusetts	From Massachusett tribe of Native Americans, meaning "at or about the great hill"
Michigan	From Indian word "Michigana" meaning "great or large lake"
Mississippi	From an Indian word meaning "Father of Waters"
Missouri	Named after the Missouri Indian tribe. "Missouri" means "town of the large canoes."
Nebraska	From an Oto Indian word meaning "flat water"
New Mexico	From Mexico, "place of Mexitli," an Aztec god or leader
North Dakota	From the Sioux tribe, meaning "allies"
Ohio	From an Iroquoian word meaning "great river"
Oklahoma	From two Choctaw Indian words meaning "red people"
South Dakota	From the Sioux tribe, meaning "allies"
Texas	From an Indian word meaning "friends"
Utah	From the Ute tribe, meaning "people of the mountains"



Mumbai Mondays

"Many Nations: Native Americans in the United States"

Join us for a discussion about the history of Native Americans in the United States and the struggle to preserve Native American identity and culture. Around the world, many indigenous peoples have been excluded from government processes and experience physical, economic and social hardships. In the United States, Native Americans were victimized by war, disease, and forced exile due to colonists' quest for land and natural resources aided by permissive government policies. After centuries of difficult and tense relations, the U.S. government has strengthened its engagement with its Native American community by working to increase educational, social and economic opportunities for American-Indians.

About a speaker

Ajay Rao is a Foreign Service Officer serving at the U.S. Consulate General in Mumbai. He joined the U.S. Department of State in February 2011 and worked for one year as a desk officer in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs in Washington, DC. Before that, Ajay taught English for four and a half years in Seoul, South Korea, most recently at Yonsei University. He graduated with an M.F.A. in English and Creative Writing from Mills College in 2005 and got a B.A. in English from Dartmouth in 2000. He grew up in Dallas, TX, but thinks that Albuquerque, NM, where his wife Elena is from and the Mexican food is better, is his real home. Elena and he have been married for three years and have a 12-year-old Foreign Service cat Eggy, whom they adopted while they were living in Seoul. Ajay loves sports and nature.

U.S. Consulate General
C-49, G-Block, Near Trident Hotel,
Bandra-Kurla Complex,
Bandra-East, Mumbai-400051

Free and open to the public
on a first-come, first-served basis.

17 September²⁰¹²
at 6:30 p.m.

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